

# ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

## Artist of the Week: Nicole Follman

2016-07-21 12:27:00



Nicole Follman comes from a long line of opera divas. This year, she takes a big leap toward becoming one herself.

She has spent the summer in Europe participating in two programs: the Orange County Ars Vocalis Academy, in which students spend three weeks in Rome receiving individualized instruction and the chance to sing in the country where opera originated, and the Saarburg Festival in Luxembourg, where she performed with a full orchestra.

In the fall, she plans to attend the prestigious Jacobs School of Music opera program at Indiana University.

**Name:** Nicole Follman

**School:** San Clemente High School

**Grade:** recently graduated

**Hometown:** San Clemente

**How did you get involved in music?** My mom said that from the moment I was born, I came out singing. It wasn't until I started opera lessons in middle school with my cousin, Robin Follman, that I uncovered my lineage. I am a fourth-generation opera singer. My great grandmother Dorothy Derfus was an affluent diva back in the 1930s. For my grandmother, opera was more than just a hobby. As a single mother, Dorothy turned to singing in order to provide for her struggling family, relying on music as a way of life. The family opera heritage has carried down to my aunts, cousins and myself.

**What is your favorite piece of music? Who is your favorite musician/composer of all time and why?** My favorite composer would have to be Andrew Lloyd Weber, because what made me fall in love with opera was "Phantom of the Opera." It was the first opera I ever saw and I will always consider it to be my favorite. I am also a big fan of Bellini's work, as well as Strauss and Purcell.

**Who have been your influences? Did you have a mentor in your development as a performer? If so, how did they help you?** Having my cousin Robin Follman, a well-respected opera diva, knowing and working in the opera industry has been a blessing for me. She was my opera teacher since I was 12 years until I was 17. She has paved the way for me to follow. Also, Dubravka Zubovic has been my voice teacher for eight months. She has poured such positive believe into me and has given me the confidence to excel in the voice I carry.

**What inspires you?** I am a type of person who is full of motivation. Inspiration is the key to life. I believe what I do now will definitely affect me in the future. And if I start great work ethics now then it will be easier and easier as time passes by.

**The next challenge I want to take on is...** My next big challenge I will be taking on after (this summer) will be college in Indiana. I am super excited, kind of nervous, to what is to come, but I think I'm ready for it.

**Other than music, are you involved in any other activities? If yes, what are they?** I was a junior varsity soccer captain. I was a member of "It's Cool to be Kind" club. I was a math tutor. I volunteer at a near by baseball field and volunteered in my senior year at a association called Kathy's House, where I prepared and distributed food at homeless shelters. I was a part of Best Buddies club, Ping Pong club, Fashion club, and I

was part of a soccer club outside of the school called SC Surf.

**How do the arts figure in to your long-term goals?** For some of the Follman women, singing is a method for self-expression, for some a career. While I do see opera performance as a dream job, singing is also a way for me to transform the chaos of everyday life into a more manageable melody.

**What is the best advice you have received?** “Everyday make it your goal to have many small successes. Those small successes will turn into big accomplishments.” I credit my mom with instilling this into my mindset, to make me understand, to get to where you want in life, it starts identifying your goal along with putting effect toward that goal.

**I hope my legacy as an artist will be...** That I can inspire other young singers to love the art of opera. That I bring a love and enjoyment to this specialized art form.

**Contact the writer:** 714-796-2258 or [varsityarts@ocregister.com](mailto:varsityarts@ocregister.com)